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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [OTRA](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH AFM HUNG: VFM LE VAN BANG MAY TRAVEL
TO THE U.S.; HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE

Ref: A) Hanoi 258; B) State 17040

¶1. (SBU) Summary and Comment: Assistant Foreign Minister Nguyen Duc Hung informed the Charge February 10 that National Assembly Vice Chairman Nguyen Van Yeu tentatively plans to lead an Assembly delegation to Washington February 26 for discussions with Congress on WTO and the PNTR vote. VFM Le Van Bang may accompany and would use the opportunity to continue his discussions with EAP A/S Hill, and AFM Hung asked whether this timing would work for A/S Hill. The Charge stressed the importance of a successful Human Rights Dialogue and that DRL A/S Lowenkron plans to meet a number of individuals of interest in HCMC. AFM Hung responded that the MFA takes USG considerations seriously but is constrained by preparations for the upcoming Communist Party Congress. Our best estimate is that the GVN will not get in the way of these meetings, although it is likely that A/S Lowenkron will hear about it during the dialogue and the GVN will express its disappointment after the fact. The Charge and AFM Hung also discussed the New Embassy Compound and, reported septel, Iran and the IAEA and Venezuela's bid for a non-permanent UNSC seat. End Summary.

VFM Le Van Bang May Accompany Possible Assembly Delegation

¶2. (SBU) Meeting with the Charge February 10, Assistant Foreign Minister and Americas Department Director General Nguyen Duc Hung said that a high-level National Assembly delegation may visit Washington for one week from February 26. The delegation would be led by National Assembly Vice Chairman Nguyen Van Yeu and would seek meetings with Congress to discuss Vietnam's WTO aspirations and the Permanent Normal Trade Relations vote. (Note: Vice Chairman Yeu is one of three National Assembly Vice Chairmen and is in charge of legislative affairs. End Note.) Contrary to initial GVN signals (Ref A), VFM Le Van Bang may join the group and would use the opportunity to respond to EAP A/S Christopher Hill's invitation to continue their discussions (Ref B). AFM Hung explained that these plans are still "preliminary" and that the National Assembly has not yet made its final decision. Nevertheless, he asked for confirmation whether A/S Hill will be available during that time.

Human Rights Dialogue

¶3. (SBU) On the subject of the bilateral Human Rights Dialogue and the visit to Vietnam by DRL A/S Barry Lowenkron and International Religious Freedom Ambassador John Hanford, the Charge underlined our hope that a results-based dialogue will help to continue the bilateral relationship's momentum in the lead-up to the President's visit in November. In order to ensure that A/S Lowenkron has the fullest possible

understanding of the human rights situation in Vietnam, once the dialogue is concluded he plans to meet with a number of individuals of interest in HCMC. AFM Hung responded that the MFA is taking into serious consideration the USG's concerns and is working hard with other agencies to ensure a successful dialogue. Because of ongoing preparations for this spring's Party Congress, however, the MFA cannot do anything it wishes and hopes that the USG understands.

NEC

14. (SBU) AFM Hung noted that, until the matter of the new property for Vietnam's Consulate General in San Francisco is resolved, the Hanoi People's Committee will not sign any contract with the USG for the New Embassy Compound. The Charge explained that the Department would soon inform the Vietnamese Embassy that it agrees in principle to the ConGen's move and that the GVN can begin to make the necessary arrangements.

Comment: Human Rights Dialogue

15. (SBU) Although our MFA interlocutors have expressed their discomfort with A/S Lowenkron's plans to meet with dissidents in HCMC, our best estimate is that the GVN will not get in the way. Instead, A/S Lowenkron will likely hear about it during the dialogue and, after the fact, the GVN will express its disappointment with USG actions, concern about the Vietnamese public's reaction and doubts about U.S. intentions.

BOARDMAN